

GOLF and GUILE

By Margaret Muzzey

Phillip Prentiss was looking for a place where he could spend his two weeks vacation playing golf. As he stepped on the train he tried to recall exactly what pretty Sallie Norton had told him at a dance the night before. She said there were several attractive resorts along the river and one where a lot of professional men and women went every summer. Unfortunately the twopenny had struck up at that moment, and she had omitted to mention its name.

"Golf links here?" Phillip asked the conductor as the train slowed down at a little station.

"Yes, sir; finest in the country. Rockdale, Rockdale! Don't forget your packages!"

An unfortunate commuter who bundled off at the same time told Phillip that the pretty little house he saw on the hill was the Rockdale Golf club, so he made his way across the fields to inspect it. The fresh breeze fanned his cheek, the blue river looked cool and refreshing in the distance, and he hoped this was the place Sallie had referred to. If, with its natural charm, it combined the advantage of making acquaintances desirable for a young man eager to advance in the legal profession nothing was left to be wished for. He felt inclined to join the commuter and ask a few more questions, only could not, in decency, without offering to carry some of his bundles and hated to make a first appearance in a new place bearing a bright blue bag of laundered shirts or a large gilt bird cage.

He interviewed the club instructor, who was leaning dejectedly against a pillar of the piazza. After inquiring the requisites for eligibility Phillip said: "You give lessons, I suppose?"

"I can't collect anything. Amounts to giving 'em, don't it?"

"How many members?" Phillip asked. "Half an almshouse, a third of an old ladies' home, a quarter of a state hospital—there's that many and that kind of folks."

The man had been drinking, Phillip thought, as he strolled down the hill toward a boarding house not far away in search of luncheon.

Phillip was seated at a small table opposite a grumpy old man dressed in a dirty flannel shirt. Among the other "guests" was an elderly woman wearing a very short skirt and spectacles, who hurried into the room followed by a fat man, who was muttering imprecations on things in general and golf in particular.

Phillip's table companion chuckled maliciously. "Must be pleasant for a man and his wife to occupy a ten by ten room all summer and not be on speaking terms. She won a cup because her handicap was bigger than his, and he won't forgive her."

"The whole atmosphere appears sulphuric," Phillip remarked.

"Are you a golfer?" asked the old man.

"Trying to be," said Phillip.

"Married?"

"No."

"It is a great game for the single blessed, but every family should be without it. There is no blood or marital relationship that can mitigate its concentrated bitterness. A woman went away from here yesterday to get a divorce because her husband accused her of moving her ball. It is an awful temptation. We are all human."

After luncheon the old man asked Phillip to play around the course. Phillip borrowed some clubs of the instructor and they started off. The old duffer, as Phillip mentally stigmatized him, sent his ball twenty-five yards, Phillip sent his seven times as many, then he and the caddy—they had one between them—ran ahead and waited.

The old man raised his ball and a cloud of earth at the same time. "He's diggin' for bait," said the caddy, grinning.

The duffer found his ball behind a small mound of sod, which he pounded flat with a brassy, batted the ball to the near side of the bunker, then paused to consider.

"Stamp on it; mash it!" cried Phillip. "Why let a barrier raised by man interfere when you can smooth out nature as you did?"

Three times the duffer struck his ball, and each time it leaped up in the air and fell on the ground just behind him.

"I say, old man, go back to the farm and play tiddlywinks," gasped Phillip. "But I don't need any more practice. I'm learning from observation."

He sent his ball, however, to the edge of the green.

The next time the duffer's ball landed just off the course in a rut. Phillip lighted a cigarette, keeping one eye on his opponent; and as he held the blazing match before his face the old man shuffled his ball with his foot to an easy lie.

"Hold on there! What are you doing?" Phillip cried.

"Nothing—nothing. I—"

"You moved your ball. I saw you. Didn't you?" to the caddy.

"Ain't he the Foxy Grandpa?" said the boy.

"He is a dishonest, disgusting, disreputable person. A man who would do that would rob widows and orphans." And Phillip marched off in a rage, leaving the duffer staring in amazement after him.

Phillip returned the clubs to the dis-

mal instructor and wring his hand at parting.

"Would you be unjust," he said. "Knowing, as I do now, what your life in this place must be, my heart bleeds for you."

Sallie had gone away when he returned to town, so Phillip could not tell her the result of his first venture into the world of sport, but he soon made another and that time scraped the acquaintance of a youth on the train who gave him some information worth having.

"If you are looking for golf come to Sunnyside—going there myself. The links are good, and you will find a lot of nice people."

"I spent an afternoon at Rockdale recently," said Phillip, and found the oddest collection of cranks and farmers imaginable.

"Cranks perhaps, but not farmers," said the youth, laughing. "The most distinguished doctors, lawyers, politicians and scientists in the state go there and all the literary and progressive lights in petticoats."

"Good heavens! All my discrimination must have escaped," Phillip exclaimed.

In the autumn Sallie was again visiting their common friend whose house Phillip first met her. They fell deeply in love with each other, Phillip asked Sallie to marry him, and she went home to tell her father about it. Soon afterward Phillip was invited to dine at Judge Norton's house in Orange.

The lovers had a few minutes' talk before dinner.

"Father says you won't be able to support a wife for years," said Sallie sadly.

"We are young enough to wait!"

"But he says in New York without a 'pull' a young man isn't likely to succeed ever."

"Doesn't he want a young partner to relieve him of the petty details?"

"Well, you see, there's my brother Sam—he's a sophomore and will be graduated in four years, if he's dropped only twice more."

They found the judge and his son waiting for them in the dining room. After greeting Phillip cordially Sam introduced him to his father, and to his blank dismay, Phillip found himself shaking hands with—the duffer!

There was not, however, the faintest gleam of recognition in the judge's eye. Phillip thanked heaven he had grown a Vandeyke beard since their last meeting. At the end of the dinner Sam and Sallie left Phillip to speak his piece to their father.

"Judge Norton, I want to marry your daughter," he said.

"How do you propose to support a wife?" inquired the judge.

"I shall work for her!"

"To all appearance," interrupted the judge, "you are without influence, fortune or the semblance of a clientele. No, young man. Go back to the farm and play tiddlywinks."

So the old duffer had known him after all.

"By the bye," said Phillip, after an instant's hesitation, "I was telling Sam about our game of golf."

"You held me up to ridicule before my son!"

"It was your moving the ball that impressed him. He said he would despise a man who did that, even if it were his own father."

"You took a mean advantage of me as if a man is ever expected to play fair when he is off for relaxation in the summer!" The judge was greatly agitated. "I would have given anything to prevent having Sam told that," he continued. "The effort of my life has been to inspire him with absolute confidence."

"But, don't you see, I couldn't tell Sam the man's name? I didn't know it myself till tonight."

"Upon my word, I forgot that!" exclaimed the judge, immensely relieved.

"How about my marrying Sallie? You said you would give anything to prevent Sam knowing you cheated at golf."

The judge winced.

"We're all human, remember. I might be tempted to tell him the man's name yet."

"No, no—not on any account! I'll gladly give you Sallie!"

"To have and to hold—my tongue—from this day forward," interrupted Phillip, laughing.

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